

OIA Ref: CAS-01817-M4S9J1

29 November 2023

Mr Davies

[fyi-request-24690-983b3353@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-24690-983b3353@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Mr Davies

**Request for information relating to Drinking Water Standards submissions and Maximum Acceptable Value (MAV) percentage increases**

Thank you for your email dated 8 November 2023, requesting the following information, which we have considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

In your email, you noted your request pertains to the document titled “Summary of submissions on Drinking Water Standards” and is related to the recent changes to the Drinking-water Standards for New Zealand as outlined in the Water Services (Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand) Regulations 2022.

You requested we:

- “1. ...provide the names of individuals, organizations, or groups along with their corresponding responses to each of the 26 survey questions presented in the aforementioned document. [If there are privacy concerns regarding individual respondents, I am willing to accept the data in a form that protects their identities, such as coded identifiers or the provision of aggregate data.]*
- 2. ...confirmation of the percentage increases in the Maximum Acceptable Values (MAVs) for various substances as indicated in the transition from the Drinking-water Standards for New Zealand 2005 (Revised 2018) to the Water Services (Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand) Regulations 2022. Specifically, the substances and their respective alleged percentage increases are as follows:*
  - Atrazine: 4900% increase*
  - MCPA: 39,900% increase*
  - Metalaxyl: 200% increase*
  - Trichloroethene: 50% increase*
  - Radon (total alpha activity): 400% increase*
  - Radon (total beta activity): 100% increase*
  - Aluminium: 900% increase*

*Please provide the relevant data or documentation that confirms or corrects these figures.”*

Our response to your request is set out below.

## Response

### **Background**

1. Taumata Arowai became the water services regulator on 15 November 2021 when the responsibility for regulating drinking water transferred from Manatū Hauora | Ministry of Health to us with the commencement of the Water Services Act 2021 (the Act).
2. The Water Services (Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand) Regulations 2022 came into force on 14 November 2022, and replaced the Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand 2005 (revised 2018). The new regulations established revised Maximum Acceptable Values (MAVs) for determinands in drinking water.
3. The power to make drinking water standards is set out in section 47 of the Act and sits with the Governor General, acting on Ministerial advice. We are required under section 53(1) of the Act to ensure that public consultation is undertaken before drinking water standards are made. This consultation occurred over 10 weeks from 17 January to 25 March 2022.

### **Drinking Water Standards Submissions**

4. You noted that your request relates to the [Summary of submissions on Drinking Water Standards](#), which is publicly available on our website.
5. Included as an attachment to this response is our internal analysis of the submissions on the Drinking Water Standards, and advice to our senior leadership team (Kaihautū o Puni Arowai | KOPA) from staff on the next steps post-consultation. This analysis document was used as the basis for the Summary of submissions on Drinking Water Standards.
6. Pages 9-50 of the attachment include the survey questions we asked, responses, and the key comments from submitters. We have provided this to you in this form to protect the privacy of individual respondents.

### **Percentage increases in the Maximum Acceptable Values (MAVs)**

7. Taumata Arowai did not undertake calculations in relation to percentage increases in MAVs for determinands.
8. Because this information does not exist, and to the best of our knowledge is not held by another department, we are refusing this part of your request under [sections 18\(e\) and \(g\)](#) of the OIA.

### **Right to complain**

You have the right by way of complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA to seek an investigation and review of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi



Helen Robertson  
Director Policy